

the fair process they deserve when petitioning for a change in characterization of their discharge. Fairness for Veterans will do just that.

While I am proud that the final NDAA bill includes Fairness for Veterans—make no mistake—there is still a great deal more work to be done. I will continue working with the Defense Department to ensure that discharge review boards are providing the appropriate consideration when reviewing PTSD and TBI related appeals.

I applaud the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act, and I intend to continue fighting on behalf of our Nation's veterans. Thank you.

#### LEGISLATION OBJECTION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, in accordance with my policy to put a notice in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD whenever I place a hold on legislation, I object to any unanimous consent request to pass H.R. 6438, a bill to extend the waiver of limitations with respect to excluding from gross income amounts received by wrongfully incarcerated individuals. I object not because I disagree with the policy underlying this proposal—in fact, I support it—but because the Senate cannot pass this singular bill ignore the long list of other tax proposals that are outstanding or expiring at end of this Congress; among them clean energy and infrastructure incentives that create good-paying jobs, an education incentive that makes a college degree more affordable, provisions to make homes more affordable to the middle class and protect struggling homeowners from a tax bill if they negotiate mortgage debt relief.

#### DACA

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish today to speak about the need to protect undocumented young people, commonly referred to as DREAMers, from deportation by preserving the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, or DACA.

President-Elect Trump has threatened to eliminate the program, which would have serious consequences for families and communities across the United States, particularly those in California.

That is why I join my colleagues in the Senate to urge that President-Elect Trump allow young people to continue to study, work, and live in our country.

The DACA program was announced by President Obama in 2012. It temporarily halts the threat of deportation for undocumented young people who were brought to the United States as children before their 16th birthday.

DACA also provides the opportunity to obtain work permits and the documents often required to enroll in college.

Around 750,000 young people have been admitted to the program, allow-

ing them to come out of the shadows and make incredible contributions to their communities.

Nearly half of DREAMers—370,000—live, work and are educated in California. They are an essential part of the fabric of our communities and it is so important for people and the President-Elect to know the very real, human side to this issue.

I would like to begin with the story of one talented and ambitious Californian who has taken full advantage of the opportunity she had been given by the DACA program.

Denisse Rojas arrived in the United States when she was just 10 months old, brought here from Mexico. Like many of our immigrant ancestors, her parents wanted to make a better life for her and her siblings.

Denisse's family is similar to many undocumented families in California. After arriving in Fremont, CA, her father worked full-time in a restaurant while pursuing his high school diploma at night.

Her mother attended community college part-time for 7 years to earn her nursing degree. Denisse excelled in high school, graduating with a 4.3 GPA. She attended U.C. Berkeley, one of the top public universities in the Nation, to study biology and sociology.

Denisse dreamed of going to medical school, driven in part by a family member's early death from cancer. The disease was diagnosed at a late stage because the family's immigration status made it impossible to afford health insurance.

Denisse worked as a waitress and commuted an hour each way to classes because she couldn't afford to live on campus. After graduation, she volunteered at San Francisco General Hospital.

Today, Denisse is attending medical school in New York at one of the country's top programs, and she is on track to earn her degree in 2019. To help other students navigate the admissions process and pursue careers in health and medicine, Denisse cofounded a national nonprofit organization called Pre-Health Dreamers.

Pre-Health Dreamers has connected an incredible network of students, and I would like to introduce you to just a couple of them: Oscar Hernandez is a medical student at U.C. Irvine. He grew up in San Diego's Barrio Logan neighborhood and received his bachelor's degree in physiology and neuroscience from U.C. San Diego. Oscar is being specially trained to address the unique challenges in providing health care to California's Latino communities—a growing need in our State.

Seung Lee is a medical student at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. His family immigrated to the United States from South Korea in 1998. Seung is also pursuing a career in medicine because he wants to help reduce inequality by increasing access to health care in his community.

Through Pre-Health Dreamers, Denisse has helped bring Oscar, Seung,

and many other students together as they work toward their goals.

After graduation, Denisse intends to specialize in emergency medicine and work in low-income communities to provide health care to families like her own that too often go without needed treatment. Parts of California, particularly our rural communities, are very short on doctors. We desperately need people like Denisse who want to work in communities most in need of skilled health care professionals.

Without the DACA program, Denisse wouldn't be able to obtain the license required to practice medicine. She would not have the proper work authorization or accompanying documents. And our country would be denied a highly qualified, motivated doctor.

DREAMers are also working in classrooms across the country. Jaime Ballesteros came to the United States from the Philippines when he was 11 years old.

He excelled in school but knew that being undocumented would make it much harder to go to college.

Jaime's English teacher encouraged him to pursue private scholarships, and he enrolled in Drew University, a top school for teachers.

Jamie was admitted into the DACA program during his junior year of college. He obtained a work permit and said filing his taxes for the first time was "one of the happiest days of my life."

Jamie wanted to give back to students facing the same challenges he did, and he joined Teach for America. Today he serves as a 7th grade science teacher at KIPP Academy of Innovation, a STEM charter middle school in east Los Angeles.

Now, I would like to explain the application process these young people go through. They need to pay a nearly \$500 application fee and provide a wide range of documents to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services showing their identity; proof they came to the United States before their 16th birthday; proof that they were present in United States on June 15, 2012; proof that they have continuously lived in United States since June 15, 2007; and confirmation that they are or have been students or honorably discharged military veterans. Potential DACA recipients must also undergo a criminal background check, during which fingerprints and photographs may be collected. Those with felony convictions or three or more misdemeanors are ineligible for the program. Once approved, DREAMers must reapply every 2 years. The renewal process allows the Department of Homeland Security to ensure young people still meet the program's requirements.

Despite the program's success, exemplified by young people like Denisse, Oscar, Seung, Jamie, and many others, President-Elect Trump has threatened to immediately rescind the program. There is a very real fear that DREAMers and their families could be targeted